

## COLONIES FOR THE WEST.

**Surplus Population of the East to Settle on Arid Western Lands.**

It has been years since the cry of "Westward, ho!" has been heard in the eastern states, and meantime the cities and thriving manufacturing centers east of the Mississippi have been rapidly filling to the point of overcrowding, until labor is a drug on the market. Mining, which attracted so many hundreds of people from the east many years ago, has lost its glamour, hunting and trapping have too many devotees already to encourage more to enter this life to-day, granger life on the western scale requires too much capital and the too-plentiful foreclosure of western farm mortgages has been discouraging to those who may have been considering emigration. All these things have tended to stagnate the population of the east, and the result is alarming to all concerned, capital and labor alike.

An opportunity has presented itself at last, through what is known as the Carey law, passed by the Fifty-third congress, by which each of eight western states was granted one million acres of arid land located within their borders on condition that they utilize them for agriculture, through irrigation, and prove to the secretary of the interior that their irrigation plans are feasible.

Five of the eight states have accepted the proposition, and one more is expected to reply favorably before long. The national irrigation congress, a body composed of delegates from twenty-three western states, has appointed a national irrigation commission, which body is engaged in forming colonies to take up these arid lands and carry them on by irrigation under proper and scientific direction.

Some of the details of the scheme are given in the Boston Transcript. It is the purpose of the commission to form colonial clubs throughout the east, wherever there is a congregation of population, and these clubs will disseminate information concerning the present and future possibilities of the western country. It is not intended to send out separate families, which would certainly become entangled in difficulties, if not properly directed. Whole colonies are to be organized and dispatched to favorable localities, with men competent to teach them the solution of the problem of irrigation and agriculture. These colonies it is proposed to organize on the principles upon which the successful Mormon colonies were carried on. An organization, to be known as the Plymouth colony, is now being formed to take up lands in Idaho. Each member of this colony is to furnish one thousand dollars capital. The land is to be taken in small holdings, and the whole managed on the basis of a co-operative village.

## GOOD HEALTH OF HOBOES.

**Tramps Generally in Better Condition Than Any Other Class of People.**

Prof. John J. McCook, of Trinity college, in a recent lecture in New Haven on "The Pathological Aspect of the Tramp Problem," gave the following interesting facts about the knights of the road:

"New Jersey was the first state to pass a law punishing the professional tramp and at the same time to define what he was. This was in 1876. Rhode Island was the next, and Connecticut came third. A recent writer asserts that there are about 60,000 tramps in the United States. This number is a trifle large, although it is safe to say that there are over 40,000. This is larger than the army of Wellington at Waterloo. We look on tramps as human wrecks, as driftwood, and yet the majority of them are in the prime of life, and in better than the average health. Only 8 1/2 per cent. of the tramps from whom my statistics were gleaned claimed in the dead of winter, while the grip was raging, that they were in bad health. They are robust, and will fill you with envy, malice, and all other jealous feelings when you hear them snoring at midnight.

"Eighty-one per cent. of tramps declare that they took to the road because they were out of a job, and only one man because machinery took his place. Over 60 per cent. of the English tramps are given as taking the road because of vagrant habits. The majority of our tramps are of American birth, 65 per cent. of 1,243 being of American parentage and 273 Irish, who come next. Over 100 out of 1,738 tramps could read and write, and they all spend money on the daily newspapers. Out of 1,389, only 79 are married, 57 are widowers, and 84 have children. Thirty-eight per cent. say they work for their food, 24 per cent. beg it, and 56 per cent. that they steal it. Over 400 sleep at cheap lodging houses, and nearly 200 in police headquarters. About 100 sleep in boxes."

## Whist in a Lion's Den.

In the Hungarian menageries a favorite sensation scene is for four whist players to sit down and play a rubber in the lion's den, while a fifth stands by to see fair play—on the part of the lions. I thought, writes James Payn in the Illustrated London News, I had played whist under all possible circumstances, and in company with the very strangest specimens of created beings, but this experience is beyond me. Some people are made nervous by folks looking over their head, which (unless they are my adversaries) does not affect me at all, but I don't think I should like this from a lion; the greater attention he paid me the less pleased I should

feel by the compliment. I am sure I should be very much put out—even if it were evoked by a mistake of my opponents—if he roared. Hungarian players do not seem to mind these things. The other day, however, it appears this very interesting performance was given once too often. The lions, with delicate forbearance, abstained, it is true, from interfering with the players, but they went for the fifth man, whom they doubtless considered superfluous, and made very short work of him. In spite of the selfishness that is often, though most unjustly, attributed to card players, the rubber broke up at once.



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